

AIR FORCE SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND

Quiet Professionals

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM LESSONS LEARNED



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AFSOC/DO



U.S. AIR FORCE



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FORCES SUMMARY

AS OF 1 FEB 03

- **MC-130E/H COMBAT TALON I & II**
- **MC-130P COMBAT SHADOW**
- **AC-130H/U GUNSHIPS**
- **MH-53 PAVE LOW HELICOPTER**
- **EC-130 COMMANDO SOLO**
- **720th SPECIAL TACTICS GROUP**





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MC-130E/H COMBAT TALON I & II



TYPE MISSIONS:

INFIL / EXFIL, RESUPPLY, AIRDROP,
AIRLAND, BLU-82, HAR, PSYOP,
HUMANITARIAN RELIEF

SORTIES FLOWN:

MC-130E	1,718
MC-130H	1,106

HOURS FLOWN:

MC-130E	4,351
MC-130H	5,172



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MC-130P COMBAT SHADOW



TYPE MISSIONS:

HELO AIR REFUELING, SEARCH
AND RESCUE, INFIL/ EXFIL,
AIRDROP, AIRLAND

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,082

HOURS FLOWN: 3,481



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AC-130H/U GUNSHIPS



TYPE MISSIONS:

CAS, ARMED RECCE, ARMED
INTERDICTION, C2 RELAY

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,238

AC-130H: 621

AC-130U: 617

HOURS FLOWN: 8,124

AC-130H 3,093

AC-130U 5,031



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MH-53

PAVE LOW HELICOPTER



TYPE MISSIONS:

INFIL/EXFIL, CSAR

SORTIES FLOWN: 1,053

HOURS FLOWN: 2,431



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EC-130 COMMANDO SOLO



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TYPE MISSION:

PSYCHOLOGICAL OPERATIONS
BROADCASTS

SORTIES FLOWN: 373

HOURS FLOWN: 2,888





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AFSOC SPECIAL TACTICS GROUP



TYPE MISSION:

SR/DA/SSE/UW

AUSTERE AIRFIELD OPS:

CONT'L 8,100 SORTIES

TERMINAL ATTACK CTRL:

630 TERMINAL AIR STRIKES

C2 OF UAV'S

2.2 MIL LBS OF BOMBS

PERSONNEL RECOVERY:

**AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTS/
INCIDENTS**



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LESSONS LEARNED

C2ISR

- LIMITED C2ISR ASSETS (AWACS, JSTARS, RIVET JOINT, PREDATOR) AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT SOF.
 - SOF OPERATIONS NOT FULLY COORDINATED WITH C2ISR ASSETS DUE TO:
 - STOVEPIPED FUNCTIONS
 - OVER CLASSIFICATION
 - ATO REQUIREMENTS FOR SOF GROUND/AIRBORNE ALERTS
 - SOLUTION: FULLY INTEGRATE SOLE IN ALL FUNCTIONS
 - SOF LACKED KNOWLEDGE OF CAF C2ISR AND EW CAPABILITIES/EMPLOYMENT LIMITATIONS
 - SOF'S DESIRE TO BE "CLANDESTINE"
 - LACK OF COORDINATION/COMMUNICATION WITH CFACC
 - SOLUTION: "SPREAD THE WORD" & INTEGRATED SOLE
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LESSONS LEARNED

UAV's

- **UAV INTEGRATION GREATLY INCREASED AC-130 EFFECTIVENESS**
 - **ACQUIRED ABILITY TO INTEGRATE UAV'S INTO TERMINAL ATTACK CONTROL OPERATIONS**

 - **SUCCESS OF TACTICAL UAV'S**
 - **ROUTE RECON**
 - **FORCE PROTECTION**
 - **VIEWING AVENUES OF APPROACH**
 - **POSITIVE TARGET ID**
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LESSONS LEARNED

INTEGRATION/DECONFLICTION

- **AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES DID NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AVAILABLE DECONFLICTION SYSTEMS (BLUE FORCE TRACKING, SADL, LINK-16)**
 - **LACK OF TRAINING/EDUCATION AND CONOPS**
 - **FILTERING OF BFT SIGNALS**

 - **SOLUTION: GET COP TO THE FIELD; TRAINING AT SOF UNIVERSITY**
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FIRES

- TARGETS WERE FRAGGED INSIDE KNOWN RESTRICTED FIRE AREAS/NO FIRE AREAS ESTABLISHED IN THE AOC. TARGET DECONFLICTION DEFAULTED TO THE SOLE

 - FRATRICIDE
 - C2ISR AND CAF WERE PROVIDED LIMITED INFORMATION ON SOF TEAM OPERATIONS/LOCATION – SEVERAL CLOSE CALLS
 - NAVIGATIONAL PROCEDURES/AWARENESS – ONE FRATRICIDE INCIDENT

 - THERE WAS NO FIRE SUPPORT CELL IN THE CJTF TO DECONFLICT OPERATIONS WITH THE GROUND FORCE COMMANDER
 - SOLUTION: LOCATED AN ACCE WITH CJTF
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LESSONS LEARNED

SYSTEMS INTEROPERABILITY

- **LACK OF COMMONALITY (DATUM AND FORMAT) AMONG THE SERVICES (WGS 72 VS 84)...COORDINATION IMPACTED**
 - **LED TO DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING HLZ, DZ, FRIENDLY AND ENEMY TARGET LOCATIONS**

 - **AIR UNITS DID NOT ALWAYS UTILIZE SAME COORDINATE SYSTEM AS GROUND UNITS (LAT/LONG VS. GRID)**
 - **SOLUTIONS: EXCHANGE OF LNO'S; EDUCATE NEW UNITS AS THEY ARRIVE, CONTINUED JOINT EXERCISES/TRAINING**
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AFSOC *LESSONS LEARNED*

PSYOPS CAMPAIGN

- **LIMITED FEEDBACK TO COMMANDO SOLO ON QUALITY/PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS OF BROADCAST**





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LESSONS LEARNED

“EXTREME” OPERATIONS

- AIRCRAFT OPERATED ON THE MARGINS
 - HIGH GROSS WEIGHTS/PRESSURE ALTITUDES/ TEMPERATURES
 - HELO A/R OPERATIONS CONDUCTED AT 10,000 FT.
 - LOW LEVEL OPERATIONS 10-15,000 FT.
 - AIRDROP PROFILES (HIGH ALT MASS CDS AIRDROPS)
 - IMPOSING ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCES LIKE “TALCUM POWDER” DUST AND “LOW VISIBILITY CONTRAST RIDGELINES”
 - SOLUTION: LIMIT THOSE MISSIONS IN THESE ENVIRONMENTS; MANAGE RISK OF THOSE MISSIONS THAT ARE “MUST DO”; EDUCATE INCOMING CREWS WITH LESSONS LEARNED; VALUE OF KIRTLAND TRAINING

 - AIRCREW LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE INADEQUATE FOR LONG DURATION HIGH ALTITUDE OPERATIONS
 - SOLUTION: SHORT TERM: ADDITIONAL CLOTHING
LONG TERM: AIRCRAFT MODIFICATION
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AFSOC SPECIAL TACTICS LESSONS LEARNED

- **SPECIAL TACTICS**
 - **AIRMEN ON THE GROUND GREATLY ENHANCED AIRPOWER EFFECTS**
 - **HANDOFF OF ST AIR TRAFFIC CONTROLLERS TO CONVENTIONAL FORCES DELAYED FOLLOW-ON OPERATIONS**
 - **TERMINAL CONTROL IS NOT MERELY CAS BUT MORE ACCURATELY DESCRIBED AS BATTLEFIELD AIR OPERATIONS (BAO)**
 - **TACTICAL UAV'S – FORCE MULTIPLIER!**
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■ **FINAL THOUGHTS**

- **OEF WAS A SPECIAL OPERATIONS WAR**
 - **THERE WERE MANY “LESSONS LEARNED”**
 - **HAVE TAKEN CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**
 - **NEXT CONFLICT, DEPENDING ON TIMING, COULD BE FOUGHT BY SAME WARRIORS – WON’T HAVE TO RE-LEARN LESSONS!**
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QUESTIONS/COMMENTS

